



# Winter Weather Tip Sheet

National Weather Service

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** Following are winter weather-related story ideas that you may want to develop as weather and science-related features.

## **A Major Winter Storm is Brewing - How is it Monitored and Forecast?**

Have you ever wondered how the National Weather Service can tell a major winter storm is brewing and will impact your area in the coming days or hours? How can meteorologists tell if a storm is intensifying and where it will bring the most snow? It's a highly sophisticated process. It all starts with observing the current situation. The National Weather Service operates a widespread network of observing systems such as geostationary satellites. Doppler radars, and automated surface observing systems that constantly monitor the current state-of-the-art numerical computer models to provide a glimpse of what will happen next - ranging from hours to days. Want to learn more about the technologies? Visit the following web page: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov> For additional information on this story, contact Susan Harrison, NWS Public Affairs, (301) 763-8000 ext. 7007

## **Why is Predicting the Exact Amount of Snowfall So Challenging?**

Snow forecasts continue to improve, but they remain a challenging task for meteorologists. Heavy snow often falls in small bands that are hard to discern on larger resolution computer models. In addition, extremely small temperature differences define the boundary line between rain and snow. Will the approaching storm bring heavy snowfall to your area? Each winter, meteorologists at the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla., monitor weather data from across the nation for developing bands of heavy snow and freezing precipitation, as well as lightning, within weather systems. Want to learn more about the Storm Prediction Center's operations? visit the Storm Prediction Center web page at <http://www.spc.noaa.gov> For additional information contact Keli Tarp, NOAA/Norman Public Affairs at (405) 366-0451

## **Are you Prepared for Winter Weather?**

Winter weather too often catches people unprepared. Researchers say that 70 percent of the fatalities related to ice and snow occur in automobiles, and about 25 percent of all winter related fatalities are people that are caught off guard, out in the storm. What winter weather preparations are being made in your area, and what are the appropriate steps to take that will ensure your winter weather safety? Help your readers, viewers and listeners make sure their homes and cars are ready for the worst winter has to offer. For additional information on this story, contact John Leslie, National Weather Service Public Affairs, (301)713-0622 or visit the Winter Weather Awareness web page at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om>



## TIP SHEET Continued

### Getting the Latest Winter Weather Information

There is no better way to keep ahead of a winter storm than with **NOAA Weather Radio (NWR)**, a small receiver device that can be purchased at many electronic stores. As the "Voice of the National Weather Service," it provides continuous broadcasts of the latest weather information from local National Weather Service offices. The NWR network has more than 750 stations, covering all 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and U.S. Pacific Territories. Weather radios come in many sizes, with a variety of functions and costs. The NWR network has been further advanced by the implementation of Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) technology. The SAME allows the user to receive warnings only for their specific location. SAME receivers are a life-saving tool, providing audible alert tones for any weather warnings. A NOAA Weather Radio is a useful and potentially life-saving gift idea this holiday season. *For additional information on this story, contact John Leslie, NWS Public Affairs, (301) 713-0622, or visit NOAA Weather Radio homepage at:* <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr>

### Hard At Work When the Storm Hits

While most of us stay home from work or school during severe winter weather, National Weather Service meteorologists are hard at work. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, NWS meteorologists staff local offices across the country to make sure the latest forecasts, watches and warnings get out to emergency managers, the media, and the public. What's it like at a forecast office? Don't wait for a major winter storm; contact your local office and ask to spend the day with them, and observe the exciting, day-to-day process of forecasting the snow before it hits. *For additional information on this story, contact John Leslie, NWS Public Affairs, (301) 713-0622. To find the local forecast office in your area, visit the NWS web site at* <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>

### What is Wind Chill?

One of the gravest dangers of winter weather is wind chill. The wind chill is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin by combined effects of wind and cold. As the wind increases, heat is carried away from the body at an accelerated rate, driving down the body temperature. Animals are also effected by wind chill. Check out the wind chill chart on the Internet at:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/er/iln/tables.htm#wind>

### NOAA's Snow and Ice Center

The National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) serves as the national information center that supports research in glaciers and freezing weather phenomenon. The NSIDC archives snow and ice data, and maintains information about everything from avalanches to icebergs. The NSIDC web site contains a fascinating list of Questions and Answers about snow that are sure to be of interest to anyone experiencing winter weather. *For additional information contact Pat Viets at 301-457-5005, or visit the NSIDC web site at* <http://www.nsidc.colorado.edu>



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